

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HALIFA 00201 251801Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 SSC-01 AGR-10 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06 LAB-04 EPG-02

SIL-01 OMB-01 OES-07 /118 W

-----251811Z 041941 /56

P 251735Z MAY 77

FM AMCONSUL HALIFAX

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1630

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

ALL OTHER CONSULATES IN CANADA (BY POUCH)

UNCLAS HALIFAX 0201

E O 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: MAY 24 FEDERAL BYELECTION IN PEI

1. SUMMARY: LIBERAL CANDIDATE DON WOOD WON THE MALPEQUE FEDERAL HOUSE OF COMMONS SEAT BY A MARGIN OF 123 VOTES IN THE CLOSE-FOUGHT BYELECTION HELD MAY 24 IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND. THE SEAT HAD BEEN HELD FOR 25 YEARS BY PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE ANGUS MAC LEAN WHO RECENTLY RESIGNED IN ORDER TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP OF THE PEI PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. BOTH THE LIBERAL PC CANDIDATES RECEIVED SUPPORT THROUGH VISITS TO THE RIDING BY THEIR NATIONAL PARTY LEADERS. END SUMMARY.

2. FOOD PROCESSING EXECUTIVE DON WOOD WON HIS SECOND ATTEMPT TO TAKE THE MALPEQUE SEAT WITH A VOTE TOTAL OF 4,656. WOOD HAD TRIED FOR THE SEAT IN 1968 BUT LOST TO ANGUS MAC LEAN BY A MARGIN OF 210 VOTES. PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE DR IAN MAC QUARRIE, CHAIRMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PEI BIOLOGY DEPT., POLLED 4,533 VOTES, 123 LESS THAN WOOD. TWO OTHER CANDIDATES ALSO RAN: NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S CHARLES SARK, A BUSINESSMAN AND VOCATIONAL TEACHER, AND INDEPENDENT NEIL HARPHAM, AN UNEMPLOYED CARPENTER.

3. MALPEQUE IS A RURAL AREA, HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON AGRICULTURE AND FISHING WITH A SPRINKLING OF SMALL BUSINESSES OPERATING IN THE VILLAGES THAT DOT THE RIDING

THE ELECTION ISSUES WERE PRIMARILY TRADITIONAL BREAD AND BUTTER ONES OF EMPLOYMENT, AGRICULTURE, FISHING, AND TRANSPORTATION. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 14,000 REGISTERED VOTERS IN MALPEQUE.

4. PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU CAME TO THE RIDING TO CAMPAIGN FOR WOOD ON MAY 19. HIS BRIEF SPEECH EMPHASIZED NATIONAL UNITY, AN ISSUE WHICH HAD FAILED UNTIL THEN TO EMERGE AS A MAJOR TOPIC IN THE CAMPAIGN. THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES SENT NATIONAL PC LEADER JOE CLARK (MAY 18-19) AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER JOHN DIEFENBAKER (MAY 14-16) TO ASSIST CANDIDATE MAC QUARRIE. CLARK PRAISED THE BENEFITS OF RURAL AND SMALL TOWN LIFE AND SAID A PC VICTORY WOULD LEAD TO A RENEWED EMPHASIS ON RURAL LIFE.

5. COMMENT: THIS BYELECTION WAS DECIDED BY A SUCH SMALL MARGIN OF VOTES THAT IT IS HARD TO ISOLATE ANY ONE FACTOR THAT BROUGHT THE LIBERALS THEIR VICTORY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE TRUDEAU VISIT, DURING WHICH VOTING LIBERAL WAS EQUATED WITH VOTING FOR NATIONAL UNITY, INFLUENCED SOME VOTERS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, ELECTION CANDIDATES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: HALIFAX
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770520/aaaaarje.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
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Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
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Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2381303
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAY 24 FEDERAL BYELECTION IN PEI
TAGS: PINT, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b132d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009